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Policy on RSA — The Inner Cabinet's decision not to sign any new defense agreements with South Africa provides an answer to the U.S. Congress' threat to punish countries having military ties with the RSA, Jerusalem television stated. In its 18 March meeting, the Inner Cabinet also agreed to reduce bilateral ties in general and to establish a special committee to formulate Israel's new policy toward South Africa. The television said these decisions were reached after a heated argument in which Industry Minister Ari'el Sharon opposed sanctions while Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres stressed the need to join other Western countries in taking steps. The result was a compromise as ministers agreed to condemn apartheid but rejected Peres' "maximalist" proposal for immediate economic sanctions, Jerusalem radio noted.

Call-up — Jerusalem radio broadcast call-up orders for 10 IDF units 18 March, pointing out that this is the first time a call-up exercise has been held without prior notice.

Palestinian Talks

The next PNC meeting may be held in Algeria 20 April, Fatah official Salah Khalaf revealed in remarks reported by Algiers radio. Khalaf said Fatah reached agreement on this with the DFLP and three other Palestinian organizations during a 15 March meeting in Tunis, the radio noted, adding that a preparatory meeting may be held "very shortly" to draw up an agenda.

The radio disclosed that the DFLP's Nayif Hawatmah is holding "intensive" talks with PFLP leader George Habash in Tripoli to convince him to participate in the PNC meeting. PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat will hold talks in Algiers with Habash for the same purpose, Fatah official Khalil al-Wazir said in an interview with the CSSR paper *Bratislava Pravda*.

Lebanon

Security — A Palestinian was shot dead while unloading a supply truck that had been allowed into Shatila Camp, Voice of Lebanon radio reported, noting that the PFLP held the Amal Movement responsible and urged the Syrians to halt such actions. The radio also stated that Palestinian gunmen have withdrawn from Zighdraya, near Sidon, citing reports that Amal fighters have entered the area. However, the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon subsequently reported that Zighdraya is under the control of Hizballah and gunmen loyal to dissident Amal official Hasan Hashim.

Freed Saudi — Saudi diplomat Bakr al-Damanhuri disclosed that his kidnappers had interrogated him about the fate of Nasir Sa'id, a Saudi opposition leader who disappeared in Beirut in December 1979, AFP reported. The kidnappers accused him of being party to Sa'id's arrest and handover to the Saudi authorities, Al-Damanhuri said.

Iran

Some 80 percent of the majority "Feda'i-ye Khalq" organization was smashed in 1986-87 with the arrest of more than 700 members, the deputy information and intelligence minister asserted in a statement reported by Tehran radio. The minister told reporters that charges against those arrested include attempting to overthrow the Islamic Republic, cooperating with the Tudeh Party, espionage, and sabotage. Some of those detained renounced their position and were released, the minister noted.

Iran-Iraq Conflict

Maritime Raid — Iraqi aircraft hit a second maritime target near the Iranian coast 18 March, according to an Iraqi military spokesman cited by INA.

Egyptian Aid to Iraq — Iraq has requested more military experts from Egypt, IRNA disclosed citing the Kuwaiti paper *Al-Watan*. According to the paper, President Husni Mubarak approved the request without referring it to the Egyptian parliament. The last batch of 20 Egyptian military experts arrived in Baghdad over the past 2 months and Egyptian military officers have been "actively involved in preparing war plans," the paper added.

Egypt on Iranian Missiles — Referring to recent reports about Iranian missile installations near the Strait of Hormuz, the Egyptian defense minister said that Iran has deployed surface-to-surface missiles in the area in order to attack shipping, MENA reported.

Egypt-USSR

Egypt and the USSR are expected to sign an agreement settling Egypt's military debts and cancelling the interest on them, *Al-Ahram revealed 16 March. The debts and other issues will* be discussed during talks beginning 18 March in Moscow between Soviet officials and an Egyptian delegation led by Economy Minister Yusri Mustafa, the paper reported.

Djibouti Explosion

A powerful bomb exploded in a Djibouti coffee shop 18 March, killing 8 people and injuring 27, Paris radio reported, noting that French personnel were among the casualties. Security circles in Djibouti attributed the attack to a former commerce minister who was recently sentenced to life imprisonment, the radio added.

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